

Message Text

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: DEFECTION SOVIET ATHLETE

REF: MONTREAL 1067

1. MONTREAL PRESS CONTINUED INTENSIVE COVERAGE OF NEMTSANOV DEFECTION IN AUGUST 3 EDITIONS. IN PAGE ONE ARTICLE, GAZETTE WROTE SOVIET DIVER DEFECTED FOR LOVE OF "DAUGHTER OF AMERICAN MILLIONAIRE" HE MET WHEN ATTENDING SWIMMING MEET IN FORT LAUDERDALE LAST YEAR. GAZETTE QUOTED ITS SOURCE AS SAYING NEMTSANOV "HAS NO INTENTION OF STAYING IN CANADA. HE WANTS TO GO AND LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES." ALSO ON PAGE ONE ARTICLE, MONTREAL STAR REPORTED ON PREVIOUS DAY'S PRESS CONFERENCE OF KOLESOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF SOVIET OLYMPIC DELEGATION, WHO CHARGED DIVER HAD BEEN BRAINWASHED AND WHO DESCRIBED AS GANGSTERS THE LAWYERS WHO ACCOMPANIED NEMTSANOV TO MEETING WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS. STAR ADDED KOLESOV RAISED POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM CANADA CUP HOCKEY SERIES SAYING, "WHO CAN GIVE GUARANTEES THAT THIS WOULD NOT HAPPEN AGAIN? THAT SOME ATHLETES WILL NOT BE KIDNAPPED AND KILLED? ALSO REPORTING ON KOLESOV PRESS CONFERENCE, LA PRESSE QUOTED CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN AS SAYING NEMTSANOV WAS RELAXED AND AT EASE DURING HIS MEETING WITH SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES.

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2. IN AUGUST 3 ARTICLE BY EDITORIAL WRITER, LA PRESSE SAID

VITALY SMIRNOV, VICE PRESIDENT OF SOVIET OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, "MADE AS ASS OF HIMSELF" WHEN HE SAID CANDA WOULD RUN SERIOUS RISKS UNLESS IT RETURNED NEMTSANOV TO USSR AUTHORITIES. THIS IS A REDICULOUS STATEMENTS FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF SUCH A BIG POWER. BUT WHAT IS MOST STRIKING IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH A YOUNG ATHLETE MUST GO TO LIVE HIS OWN LIFE. IT SEEMS HE DEFECTED OUT OF LOVE FOR A WEALTHY AMERICAN. BUT IT MAY BE THAT HE COULD NO LONGER STAND THE CONTROLS TO WHICH HE WAS SUBJECTED. IN THE USSR, UNLIKE HERE, ATHLETES MUST DO WHAT THE STATES TELLS THEM, ALTHOUGH THEY RECEIVE CERTAIN BENEFITS IN RETURN. THEY FOLLOW A TOUGH TRAINING SCHEDULE AND IN EFFECT BECOME PROFESSIONALS IN THEIR SPORTS, AND THIS IS WHY THEY WIN SO MANY MEDALS. THIS TOUGH SCHEDULE IS PROBABLY WHAT MADE YOUNG NEMTSANOV MAKE HIS SERIOUS DECISION. UNLESS THEY ARE ENGAGED IN WILLINGLY, SPORTS CAN BECOME A BORE. BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES, THE SOVIET SHOW OF TEMPER SHOULD PROBABLY SERVE AS A WARNING TO THE IOC. THE STRONG MIXTURE OF POLITICS IN THE MONTREAL OLYMPICS IS PROBABLY ONLY A SMALL SAMPLE OF WHAT WILL GO ON IN MOSCOW IN 1980.

HARPER

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